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'Community' – a Useful Concept in Heritage Studies?

Stefan Berger, Bella Dicks and Marion Fontaine

Introduction:

Heritage studies is a booming inter- and multi-disciplinary field that is well networked internationally. In particular, critical heritage studies have enjoyed major success internationally and every two years hundreds of scholars from across the world assemble at the conferences of the Critical Heritage Studies Association (www.criticalheritagestudies.org). As Astrid Swensson (2013) reminds us, such internationalism was inscribed in heritage right from its very beginnings in the eighteenth century. Heritage initiatives developed everywhere out of 'the interplay between civil society initiatives, emerging state administrations, monument owners, and a broader historical culture' (Swensson 2013: 329). Strong transnational links existed and persisted in national preservationist milieus forming a dense network of transnational contacts that globalised heritage. At the same time, however, heritage remains often intensely vernacular and local – something that, at one level, has to do with the object of study: heritage tends to take place within highly specific locations, be they streets, suburbs, villages, landscapes, regions or nations. Critiques of methodological nationalism (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2003) have pointed to the enormous power of nation states in framing science and scientific endeavour in the modern period. In the realm of heritage they constructed national peculiarities. Thus, as Swensson's study shows, much of French heritage was created by the state, whilst a lot of German heritage was authorized by middle class-driven civil society action, and a considerable part of English heritage was sanctioned by an anti-modern aristocracy (Swensson 2013: 329). The national framework, in which heritage was being studied, has been, for a long time, the dominant framework in heritage studies – regardless of parallel processes of internationalization of heritage studies.

The languages in which heritage is being studied have also remained to this day highly vernacular, despite the fact that English has become for some time now an important (albeit by no means the only) lingua franca of academic discourse in the human sciences. At many international conferences everyone has to speak a kind of English, although the research that is being presented here on non-English-speaking countries is rooted in vernacular languages. International publications in English tend to hide these vernacularisms but they do so at a cost, for we find few reflections on how those linguistic vernacularisms influence research findings. There can be no doubt that language is not just a neutral tool through which we acquire knowledge about the past and present of different societies. Language and concepts that can be very specifically used in different languages frame that knowledge and to some extent determine it. As Swensson (2013, 331) writes: 'Linguistic practice reflected the tensions between national peculiarities and the growing internationalisation.' Concepts are differently rooted in diverse languages and they often carry different meanings. Those meanings are not fixed in themselves but vary over time. Conceptual history has, in fact, become a prominent field of historical studies over recent years – also internationally (e.g Steinmetz, Freeden and Fernández-Sebastián 2017). Heritage studies would do well to engage with some of its key concepts in a comparative conceptual way (see also Dormaels 2013).

It is important to realize, however, that language groups can also hide important differences in conceptualizations within language groups. Thus, British notions of 'community' are quite different from Australian, South African or North American ones, let alone from those in other former colonial spaces that have adopted English as a language, such as India. The same is true for the Francophone areas of the former colonial world of France. The Germanic-speaking world was never as large as its Anglophone or Francophone counterparts, but as German was the most important academic language before the First World War, concepts derived from German academia travelled far, as knowledge of the German language was a vital

precondition for making a career in many parts of the world. Hence, with all three language groups, it is important to realize that there are many conceptual differences within language groups. This is also why we restrict our discussions below very largely to Britain, France and Germany as nation-states, although we realize that future research into these conceptual differences will have to take account of the interrelationship between former colonial centres and their colonial peripheries in the development of concepts like 'community'. For it is beyond reasonable doubt that exchange of ideas within language groups was and continues to be much more intense than across language groups. Hence, there are many transnational links within, say, the Anglo-world with regard to the development of concepts such as community. It is, however, largely beyond the scope of this already long article to explore them in depth.

The prominent example related to heritage studies that we explore here is the concept of 'community'. It has been hugely successful in English-language research on heritage, but has a far more problematic and less prominent use in German and French discourses on heritage. Comparing the British, French and German usages or non-usages of community in heritage studies poses important questions for research agendas in all three national contexts. At an international level those differences need to be reflected more, for comparative and transnational studies will have to start from a knowledge of how those diverse conceptualisations have framed research results in the three countries that are examined here. Otherwise there is a very real danger of misunderstanding meanings that are attributed to heritage in different national contexts. As 'critical heritage studies' endorses the move to more transnational and international work, conceptual clarifications on 'community' and other key concepts in heritage studies are a vital precondition for allowing dialogue between different linguistic scholarly groups.

Hence the article aims to show the clearly differentiated national context in which concepts of community developed from the late nineteenth century to the present day. In the

first part of this article we look at the origins of the academic use of 'community' in Germany during the late nineteenth century – highlighting the importance of the work of Ferdinand Tönnies in particular. We trace the attachment of the concept to right-wing anti-modern political agendas during the first half of the twentieth century, which allowed no restitution of the concept after the years of National Socialism. Instead, as we underline, alternative concepts were used in order to express sentiments not dissimilar to those of community, especially the concept of 'Heimat' which rose to prominence in the 1980s. Before that happened, in the 1960s and 1970s more critical ideas about industrial heritage eschewed the concept of community, which is why, to this day, it does not play a prominent role in industrial heritage studies and heritage studies more generally in Germany.

In the second part of this article we move to France, where we also find a long-term skepticism when it comes to the concept of community. The strong republican tradition, which mistrusted everything that was capable of constructing identities that would divide and compartmentalize the republican ethos, rejected notions of community. Ideas associated with community were usually seen as particularist and therefore incompatible with the universalism of republicanism in France. Hence the concept of community became widely associated with the enemies of republicanism, in particular monarchists and Catholic conservatives. In the academic world the towering influence of Emile Durkheim played a vital role in establishing an altogether different understanding of modern society than the one that had been set out by Tönnies in Germany. Subsequently, community became understood as an anti-modern force that had little place in the conceptualization of modern society in France. We highlight only one window of opportunity for the concept of community during the 1960s and 1970s, with the discovery of local heritage, including industrial heritage, and the eco-museum movement. However, by the 1980s the traditional universalist republicanism had re-established itself and driven out attempts to root the concept of community in French academic and intellectual

discourses. The hostile reception of communitarianism in France was part and parcel of this rejection of community-based ideas of heritage.

In the final part of the article we compare the skeptical reception of 'community' in the German and French cases with a far more positive left-wing tradition of community studies in Britain. Already the intellectual starting point for those interested in 'community' was different. Here it was neither Tönnies nor Durkheim, but Raymond Williams who influenced generations of left-wing scholars positively endorsing and using the concept of community. It was frequently linked to left-wing social and labour movements where common interests and social ties were expressed in terms of community. As we demonstrate, community could be linked to ordinary people and as such it served in heritage as a counter-image to the conservative, aristocracy-biased traditional heritage of the 'authorized discourse' (Smith, 2007). In this sense the concept of community merged easily with concepts of class and solidarity - connotations which were hardly present in German and French discourses on community. However, we also point out that the concept of community could be mobilized in Britain, too, for a variety of conservative and right-wing political purposes. It was by no means restricted to the left, even if, in comparison to Britain and France, it carried a far stronger left-wing tradition. We point to the different ways of theorizing community in the British tradition in order to highlight its dominant association with progressive and emancipatory causes, whilst we also recognize its linkages to more conservative projects. Finally, we also review attempts to critique the widespread usage of community and present alternative concepts, such as 'networks'. The conclusion at the end of the article will draw out some of the differences in the usages of 'community' in Britain, France and Germany and reflect on the consequences of those differences for British, French and German scholarship on heritage.

The (Largely) Right-Wing Uses of Community in German-Language Research on Heritage

The German term for community is 'Gemeinschaft'. Its origins in scholarly discourse lie with the work of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century philosophers such as Thomas Hobbes and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Spitta 2013: 73- 124). One of the father figures of German sociology, Ferdinand Tönnies, distinguished 'community' from 'society' (Gemeinschaft vs Gesellschaft) in his classic 1887 publication: 'Community is a permanent and true ,living together', whereas society is only temporary and appearance. This corresponds with the fact that community is a living organism, whereas society is a mechanical aggregate and artefact' (Tönnies 1957 [1887]: 5).

This fundamental distinction was, almost regardless of the author's intentions and complex argumentations¹ (Bickel, 1991), connected to a critique of modernity and the longing for an allegedly more organic and wholesome and less alienated past. The discourse on Gemeinschaft in the German lands can be traced back to Johann Gottfried Herder and his association of the term with a people, understood as a cultural and ethnic unity. Community was thus popularised especially by German Romanticism and associated with national community as an organic whole (Safranski 2007). In this conception modernity became the counter-opposite to community; modernity destroyed 'community' and produced 'society' which was characterised by its alienated and non-organic social relationships.

Hence in Germany the term 'community' from its earliest invocations in science carried the nostalgic desire for reconstructing premodern forms of society, often tied to ethnicity or nationality, called community. This gave the concept of community a normative bent that led subsequent scholars either to use it in a romanticising nationalist and right-wing fashion or to debunk it. As a rigid analytical concept it was not developed much further until well after the

¹ Tönnies was politically a liberal who joined the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in 1930 and was actively fighting National Socialism during the Weimar Republic for which he was dismissed from all positions after 1933. For an in-depth analysis of the dialectics of 'community' and 'society' focussing on Tönnies and Helmuth Plessner see Schneiderei 2010; for the purpose of this article we cannot go into the philosophical foundations of 'community' nor into Tönnies' politics.

Second World War and then such attempts came more from Anglo-Saxon than from German sociology (Calhoun, 1980; Brint, 2001).

It should be noted that Tönnies' 1887 publication was not an immediate success. This only changed in the first three decades of the twentieth century, when Tönnies became a leading representative of the young discipline of sociology in Germany and the long-term president of the German Society for Sociology. The reprint of the first edition in 1905 met with considerably more interest; by the second edition in 1912 it was regarded as an established text in sociology, but it was the third edition from 1920 that saw it become a run-away success. Several editions followed, the last came out in 1935, under National Socialism, despite the fact that the Nazis had silenced Tönnies – he could neither teach nor publish (Clausen and Schlüter, 1991: 9 f.).

This peculiar publication history of Tönnies' book had much to do with the fact that it was endorsed before the First World War by the German bourgeois youth movement that wrongly perceived in Tönnies an ally in their struggle against what they saw as an alienating modernity. After the First World War, the concept of 'community' rose to prominence even more with the advances of völkisch sciences. The turn to the Volk (people, but in a racial/ethnic sense) was a response to the lost First World War in Germany (Oberkrome 1993). Before the First World War, many humanities and social science disciplines had a strong state orientation, but after the war, many younger scholars felt as though such statism was no longer adequate. Instead they turned to 'Volk' as the new lead concept in the humanities and social sciences (Haar and Fahlbusch 2005). The concept of 'community' could be ideally combined with the concept of the 'Volk', for example in the composite noun of the 'people's community' (Volksgemeinschaft). It became both an analytical concept of völkisch science and of National Socialist politics that could hark back to nationalist discourses in the pre-war period (Walkenhorst 2007).

Kurt Sontheimer (1978, 251) has pointed out in his classic study on anti-democratic thinking in the Weimar Republic that 'community' was the 'magic word of the Weimar time' – it symbolized 'unity, strength, power, and inner coherence' – everything that, the right argued, was lacking in the Weimar Republic. It is hence unsurprising that the National Socialists made the composite noun 'Volksgemeinschaft' (people's community) into their most important ideological catchphrase. The National Socialist dictatorship after 1933 encouraged völkisch approaches to science in which community became ever more prominent. It described precisely the mythical, vague organicist notion of the unity of the people understood as an ethnic and racial community. Already the party programme of 1920 proclaimed the classless 'Volksgemeinschaft' understood as racial national community as the basis of their ideology. The National Socialists celebrated community in mass demonstrations, festivities, symbols, the arts, sciences in leisure-time activities, everyday discriminations, and social policies. Every part of the National Socialist state, from top to bottom, from the elite to the everyday was interwoven with appeals to and understandings of community (Lammers 1998). The conservative and fascist research traditions from the 1920s to the 1940s had little to do with Tönnies himself. In fact he abhorred the Gemeinschaft ideology, first, of the bourgeois youth movement before 1914 and then of the National Socialists in the interwar period. His foreword of the 1935 edition of his classic work explicitly warned of a misuse of his Gemeinschaft idea by the National Socialists. Nevertheless he proved unable to save his book and his concept from its reception history in Germany.

After the Second World War, the languages of 'Volk' and 'Gemeinschaft' belonged to the *Lingua Tertii Imperii* (Klemperer 2000), that is, they were deeply problematical concepts that were avoided in scientific writing, despite the fact that notions of 'Volksgemeinschaft' continued to have a powerful presence in post-war Germany well into the 1950s and can be found, for example, in constructions of Germans as a community of victims in the post-war

period (Berger 2006). Nevertheless, in post-war German sociology Tönnies, despite his persecution for political reasons under the Third Reich, disappeared from sociological research. Quite characteristic was an article by one of the most influential post-war West German sociologists, René König, who condemned Tönnies to oblivion in 1955 for not having anything relevant to say to contemporary sociologists in the post-war period (König 1955). Community belonged to those concepts that the influential Theodor Adorno characterised as 'Jargon der Eigentlichkeit'² (Adorno 1964). According to Adorno, the 'glow of the immediate' created a totality that does not allow analysis or criticism. Community, for him, was related in this totalitarian assumption to a whole range of other concepts such as 'authenticity', which, like community, was associated with a desire for immediacy and unity (Hoffmann 2000).

The condemnation of Tönnies and concepts of community found a slight correction with the attempts of the Ferdinand Tönnies Society (<http://www.ftg-kiel.de/>), founded in 1956, to revise the image of Tönnies and to emphasize the complexities of Tönnies' understanding of both 'community' and 'society'. The idea of community was also prominent in debates surrounding communitarianism from the late 1980s onwards, but most Anglophone communitarians from Amitai Etzioni to Michael Walzer did not fundamentally hark back to Tönnies (Merz-Benz 2006). Furthermore, the German reception of communitarian thought was often highly critical, precisely because the concept of 'community' was seen as a very difficult one to rehabilitate (Budäus and Grüning 1997).

Yet, in 2013 Juliane Spitta could start her radical historicisation of the uses of community in Germany with the sentence: 'Community, a term, which was for some decades, especially in Germany, politically and philosophically discredited, is experiencing a renaissance' (Spitta 2013:11). She was referring to a whole host of poststructuralist thinkers but also nationalist ones who contributed to this revival from the 2000s onwards. In some respects, this

² Eigentlichkeit is a Heideggerian term indicating the essence of a thing.

rediscovery of 'community' was picking up two distinct traditions of talking about community – one nationalist, reactionary and racist (particularly prominent in France and Germany); and the other emancipatory, democratising, revolutionary and associated with human rights and social justice discourses (prominent in Anglo-Saxon ideas about 'community'). As we shall see below, such national differences are also present in heritage discourses and their usage of 'community' in the three countries and three languages under discussion here.

In Germany, heritage and preservationist discourses that can be traced back to the nineteenth century, used the concept of community where they were related to Romantic notions of national renewal, the promotion of nationalism and the idea of the heritage of the German 'Volk'. As Susan A. Crane (2000, 18) has argued, the early nineteenth-century craze for collecting items to do with German heritage was related to 'a strong desire for community.' Linking the nation to the idea of community remained strong throughout the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, with the National Socialists biologising notions of national community in heritage discourses (Koshar 1998: 172 f.). Much of the heritage discourse in Germany was traditionally about merging the languages of identity, the languages of authenticity and the languages of community in history (Falser 2008). State administrations and private initiatives made extensive use of the language of community in order to allow them to protect heritage against the claims of allegedly particularist or individualist interests or claims over property (Speitkamp 1996). The sense of community that preservationists appealed to was anchored in layers of local, regional and national sentiments and perspectives that interacted in a multi-scalar way, in which, however, the national took pride of place (Koshar 2000: 231). This is captured by the notion of *Heimat* in Germany (Applegate 1990; Confino 1997). It combined the built environment with nature in a powerful way. As Alon Confino has written: '*Heimat* always depicted the nation as a community within nature and in harmony with nature' (Confino 2006: 46). The *Heimat* discourse was arguably the most powerful heritage discourse in

Germany until the concept of Heimat was also tainted with National Socialist racist hypernationalism.

In a divided country after 1949, 'science', including discourses on heritage, turned to Marxism-Leninism in East Germany and to a variety of Western, in particular Anglo-Saxon approaches, in the West. Early on, East German scholars put heavy emphasis on industrial heritage. The languages of class were prominent within those heritage discourses, whereas the concept of community was not used prominently in the GDR. The working class and work itself were put centre stage in heritage discourses (Kohli 1994). Part and parcel of a proud socialist tradition in Germany, with which the official GDR identified, it systematically preserved technical monuments and organised major exhibitions around these themes in the 1950s (Kierdorf and Hassler 2000, 51 – 54). The GDR also promoted industrial heritage as tourist destinations, for example, in the Freiberg mining area and the Erzgebirge. Leading preservationists such as Eberhard Wächtler and Otfried Wagenbreth emphasized the connection between a socialist view of history and industrial heritage. For them industrial heritage was a 'weapon which we have to develop further in order to ensure the victory of socialism in the world' (Wagenbreth and Wächtler 1983, 12). Yet the financial resources that the GDR could invest in heritage were limited and hence socialist heritage could only develop within tight material boundaries.

Heritage studies in West Germany were much more diverse. Initially, the biggest debate was about what to do with the destroyed German cities after 1945. Modernists saw in the destruction a unique opportunity for planning the bright new cities of the future, whereas preservationists used the language of citizenship to empower them against the modernist desire to rid cities of its, in their view, problematic heritage. Instead they argued that citizens had the right to protect their past and recreate it in the face of massive destruction. Notions of an 'integrated national community' still played a big role in those justifications for rebuilding

the German cities (Koshar 1998, 272). Overall, throughout the 1950s and 1960s, there was a much greater emphasis on traditional heritage associated with bourgeois city culture, aristocracy, kings, and the church that had been so strongly connected to notions of community for the best part of two centuries.

Yet National Socialism tainted all the languages of community, of nation, of Heimat and therefore they had become a difficult terrain for heritage scholars and preservationists. They were nevertheless still present into the 1950s and connected with a whole host of alternative concepts that seemed less problematical. Prominent among them were concepts such as 'tradition', 'identity', 'sense-production' (Sinnggebung in German). Those concepts carried many synergies with 'community' and legitimated a conservative-oriented heritage studies that dominated the West-German scene until the 1960s. The long 1960s are often seen as a decade of decisive intellectual change in the Federal Republic, when the National Socialist years were analysed in terms of German perpetratorship and guilt and from where the West German historical culture of 'coming to terms with the National Socialist past' began. Sharon Macdonald (2009) has examined in detail to what extent the negotiations about the National Socialist past have formed a major part of German 'memorylands' from the 1970s onwards (also MacDonald 2013). This concern with the darkest heritage of Germany also brought about a more critical attitude to concepts associated with National Socialism, including that of 'community'. Within heritage studies, the traditional ideas of Heimat, nation and community were challenged from the 1970s onwards by more critical approaches.

These challenges to the concept of community came at precisely the time when preservationists and heritage scholars discovered forgotten heritage, including the heritage of the working class and of industry. The first industrial monument to be placed under heritage protection in Germany was the machine hall of the coalmine Zollern in Dortmund in 1969 (Berger 2014). Art historians, artists and intellectuals had been successful in campaigning

against its planned demolition, and the fact that the machine hall was a fine example of art nouveau architecture certainly helped. But aesthetic change was also in the air during the 1970s, as a new generation of scholars and preservationists, influenced by the neo-Marxism of the 1960s, began to discover the life worlds of workers and their places of work. During the last third of the twentieth century a rapidly increasing number of industrial heritage sites were placed under protection and transformed into museums, new housing, office space, and other uses for creative purposes. The Ruhr area of Germany, formerly the most important region of heavy industry in Europe, preserved a unique industrial landscape and must today be counted among the top places of industrial heritage in the world (Berger, Wicke and Golombek 2018). As the initial attempts to preserve industrial and working-class heritage were closely aligned to the critical approaches to heritage mentioned above and, more generally, to left-of-centre movements and ideas, the language of community did not play an important role. In the 1960s and 1970s, the languages of class and solidarity seemed much more relevant (Berger 2019).

Yet more critical approaches to heritage arguably never replaced more conservative ones. They just sat next to each other. In fact, one can speak about a wave of nostalgia hitting West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s (Becker 2017). Part and parcel of that nostalgia was the revival of the concept of tradition, as a means to allow the past to become a comfortable buffer for modernising tendencies. In a world that seemed to be changing ever faster, the past became a resource that would allow those undergoing change to feel more at ease in accommodating to this change (Toffler 1970; Lübke 1981). The reference to tradition was thus closely aligned to that of compensation – traditions had a compensatory function in a changing present. Next to tradition, another concept having a renaissance from the 1980s onwards was that of Heimat – a seemingly peculiar German concept that fitted well with tradition and nostalgia (Bredow and Foltin 1981).

In the 1980s, there was also a prominent left-wing attempt to capture the concept of Heimat from the political right. It was aligned to a range of left-wing environmental new social movements, with roots in the 1968 movement, that rediscovered the value of Heimat and the need to protect it against a self-destructive growth ideology associated with liberal capitalism (Kaes 1989: 162 – 191). The language of Heimat had a far more spatial, regional connotation than the languages of class and solidarity that were more universal than place-bound. Hence, from the 1980s we also see how regional identity, linked to notions of Heimat, became far more important than class or solidarity in describing the heritage of place. If we take again the industrial heritage of the Ruhr, we can see how Heimat notions have contributed to the sidelining of class discourses and the construction of an allegedly socially homogenous regional identity (Berger, Golombek and Wicke, 2018). Today there is no shortage of political positions which argue that Heimat should not be left to the extreme right. Germany's coalition government of Christian and Social Democrats institutionalised an Interior and Heimat Ministry at the national level of politics in 2018. Such ministries also have come into being at federal level, for example in North-Rhine Westphalia (Klatt 2018; Gebhard, Geisler and Schröter 2007). Whilst many of the languages associated with traditional heritage studies are thus still prominent in the Federal Republic, the language of community remains a barren landscape. The interest in recent years in community heritage initiatives, so prominent in the Anglo-Saxon sphere, has been strong in Germany, but most scholars retain a strong scepticism with regard to the concept of 'community'. Its vagueness, its analytical bluntness, its tendencies towards holistic and essentialist understandings of social processes make it, in Uwe Pörksen's sense, a 'plastic word' that should best be avoided in scholarly work (Pörksen 1988).

Overall, then, regarding the usage of the concept of community in Germany, political forces on the right that were critical of modernity have adopted it most enthusiastically. They linked community to ethnic and racial identity, a process that culminated in National Socialist

Germany. Whilst, ironically, the founding father of the sociological concept of 'community' in Germany, Ferdinand Tönnies, was critical of such one-sided use of his concept, he was powerless to prevent it. After 1945, it belonged to those concepts too tainted by their association with the Third Reich to make a comeback. In East Germany it was replaced by concepts of class, whereas in conservative West German heritage discourses of the 1950s and 1960s it was still present but largely contained in synergetic concepts such as 'tradition' and others. Whilst the 1960s and 1970s saw a revival of class concepts in heritage in West Germany, the 1980s brought a revival of Heimat discourses closely aligned with notions of community. Both the political right and left used the concept of 'Heimat' and its popularity finds a new high point in the foundation of a Heimat ministry in the federal government of Germany in 2018. However, in scholarly discourse the concept of 'community' remains almost completely marginalised, and most heritage scholars today remain sceptical about reviving this concept.

The (Non-) Use of the Concept of Community in French-Language Research on Heritage

In France we also encounter an overwhelming scepticism towards the 'emotional halo' (Elias, 1973: 15) surrounding the concept of 'community'. The very term and everything that it encompasses, is repeatedly viewed with mistrust. It is, for example, embedded in the fear, frequently voiced in public debate, surrounding the threat of "communitarianism" (understood predominantly in an ethnic sense of diverse ethnic communities of immigrants, especially for the most recent and post-colonial immigrants from Muslim regions) preying upon the cohesion of French society and on the "Republican Pact" (Dhume-Sonzogni 2016; Mohammed and Talpin 2018). Yet the reasons for such a critical reception of the concept of 'community' are very different from the situation in Germany described above. They have been related, first and foremost to a deeply embedded Republican culture (Duclert and Prochasson 2002;

Fontaine, Monier and Prochasson, 2013) that in turn takes its ideological cue from values and norms associated with the French Revolution (Rosanvallon 2004).

The French Revolution gave birth to a new concept of citizenship and of the sovereign people (Rosanvallon 1998: 35-55). This was open, inclusive and proclaimed that all individuals – or at least all men – were equal in the eyes of the law, had a right to citizenship and, therefore, to the exercise of political power. But the trade-off for this political equality was the rejection of all castes, corporations and specificities associated with the Old Regime that might lead to inequalities, divide citizens and compromise the unity of the nation reborn in the 'Great Revolution'. In other words, French revolutionary citizenship sought to be universal – it could theoretically be enjoyed by all – but on condition that they define themselves as abstract individual citizens, denying any specific identities (related, for example, to religion, gender, ethnicity) or at least referring to them only within the private sphere (Ozouf 2008). The public arena, however, could only include citizens and the French. This political culture, at once individualistic and universalist, therefore led to the de-legitimation of specific groups and communities, which were seen to be obstacles to the people's cohesion and threats to the equality of all citizens.

The revolutionary legislators moreover intended, very concretely and from the beginning, to stamp out all privileges and the traditional rights of communities. Certain aspects of this policy are well-documented, for example those relevant to religion (Samuels 2016). Thus, in 1789, the revolutionary legislators granted Jews equal rights and citizenship, while simultaneously rejecting the political existence of a Jewish community. As stated, on the 23rd December 1789, by the revolutionary Stanislas de Clermont-Tonnerre: "Jews must be denied everything as a nation, and Jews must be granted everything as individuals." However, we sometimes forget that this rejection of specific communities also operated at the social level (Rosanvallon 1998, 115-118; Fontaine *et alii* 2013, 150-151). For the new revolutionary political culture, there could

be no social, professional, religious or regional communities. The *Le Chapelier law* (14th June 1791) thus banned the traditional craft guilds as well as the reconstitution of any professional associations and, consequently, any workers' unions, in the name of the rejection of particularist interests.

Such political universalism was profoundly ambivalent (Rosanvallon 1998, 116; Hazareesingh 2016). On one hand, it held the promise of emancipation, freeing individuals from traditional communities while granting citizenship to all, as long as they accepted to act solely as political beings within the public sphere and declined from referring to these particularist communities. On the other hand, this universalism was synonymous with exclusion, as it barred access to citizenship for all those (women, colonised people, immigrants) whose particularity was considered to be too ingrained (gender-related, ethnic, religion, class) and who were therefore unable to behave as abstract individual French citizens (Scott 1996). Thus, for example, in the early nineteenth century workers were, in principle, citizens with the same rights as others, although in practice they were subject to forms of domination and exclusion that partially divested their citizenship of its meaning (Fontaine, Monier and Prochasson 2013, 152 – 155). The Republicans who claimed to be the main heirs to the principles of the French Revolution, and who finally came to power in the 1880s, were partly aware of this problem (Rosanvallon 2004). They encouraged the reconstitution of forms of solidarity and intermediary bodies and at least partially acknowledged the existence of collective ties between citizens. Thus, for example, they legalised the labour unions in 1884 (Rosanvallon 1998: 316 – 330). Nevertheless, these new relationships had to be compatible with the dominant revolutionary political culture and republican democracy. They could not be framed as communities, as the latter were still seen as incompatible with republican values and political progress.

It is therefore no coincidence that the only nineteenth century social observers to refer explicitly to community as a concept were Catholics and conservatives hostile to the republican

political culture that stemmed from the Revolution. This was particularly true for Frédéric Le Play (1806-1882; Savoye 1989, 23-52), one of the first social researchers and observers of the new working class (*Ouvriers européens* [1855], *La réforme sociale en France* [1864]). Although his main interest was in rural communities– which he considered to be the true bearers of a lost social and political harmony – he also tried to think about the possible existence of working-class communities. But in his eyes, the effects of industrialisation prevented such social forms from functioning properly among workers (Le Play 1872: vol.2 236). The latter required the development of other types of organisation (patronage, trade unions), which could provide a tiered and stable operational structure for society. This interpretation of French industrial society, measured against the yardstick of the community concept, was never very broadly acknowledged, either by the emerging social sciences or by the political world. Only the Vichy authoritarian regime (1940-1944) attempted to exploit Le Play's theories (Savoye 1989: 44-47) and to affirm the political role of communities (family, profession, nation) within the context of an authoritarian and unequal society, thus rejecting the revolutionary heritage. But the failure of the Vichy regime, associated with defeat and above all its collaboration with Nazi Germany, merely discredited the concept of community further and made any reconciliation with the republican framework more unlikely.

The official founders of French sociology adopted a very different approach to that of Le Play. This was in particular the case for Émile Durkheim (1858-1917). The latter was a keen reader of Ferdinand Tönnies (Durkheim, 2013: 416-42). The difference that Durkheim himself established between mechanic solidarity – specific to traditional societies – and organic solidarity – which should permeate modern societies – was indeed based on the same idea and the same analysis as that of Tönnies (Mesure 2013). However, the two men differed in their assessment of the process that leads from one type of social organisation to another. Whereas Tönnies was sceptical of modernity, Durkheim, as a sociologist, but also as an active

intellectual, paid homage to this modernity, which gave rise to the individualism of human rights and the possible emergence of more open, more democratic and more emancipatory forms of solidarity. Although he intended to define scientifically the passage from "traditional" solidarities to "modern" solidarities, he clearly judged them. Mechanic solidarity, which was definitely akin to Tönnies' community, belonged to times long past that Durkheim contemplated without nostalgia. In order to avoid the risks of anomie and of the fragmentation of contemporary societies, Durkheim championed the emergence of "modern" social forms (associations, unions, organisations based on collective contracts). It is not by coincidence that Durkheimian sociology nurtured strong intellectual ties with the rising socialist movement (Prochasson 1993). Durkheim, and certain of his pupils (Maurice Halbwachs for example) also wished to contribute to the ideological development of socialism, a socialism seen as remedy for liberal individualism. Yet socialism was to be achieved through the concept of solidarity and precisely not through the concept of community that was associated by the Durkheimian tradition with archaic, pre-modern societies (Karsenti et Lemieux 2017: 70 – 71).

It is therefore not surprising that the French socialist movement never included the term community in its vocabulary (Fontaine, Monier and Prochasson 2013: 157-160). French socialism remained firmly within the framework of the Republican tradition and very hostile to other traditions more welcoming to the concept of community, especially the Catholic culture. French socialists did not see the working class as a community but rather as a political group, whose aim was general emancipation through solidarity (Rosanvallon 1998, 259-263). The socialist leader Jean Jaures epitomised such socialist Republicanism, seeking to rid the ideal from inequalities that were seen as threatening the pure Republican idea (Jaurès, 2014). Even the communists were unable to extract themselves from this conceptual framework (Monier 2002, 320-325). Although they were committed to endorsing the particularities of working-class life in all its geographical and social diversity, paying attention to life styles, leisure-time

activities, and working-class culture (Hastings 1991; Fontaine 2010; Mischi 2010), they refrained from defining the working class in terms of community. Instead they equated the working class with the Republican ideal and saw themselves as heirs of the revolutionary tradition of France (Rebérioux 2000: 234).

Like French party politics, French heritage policies did not escape the power of the universalist Republican ideal (Poulot 1997). In the nineteenth century they were structured under the auspices of the State through dedicated public administrations (the Commission for Historical Monuments) and successive laws (in particular the law of 1913³). Heritage legislation and heritage institutions were infused with universalist Republicanism. Major monuments (Versailles, le Panthéon, Notre-Dame etc.) were thus turned into testimonies for the progress of human civilisation and of French identity. Republican politics were not, however, indifferent to the heritage of the "small homelands", that is, local heritage. This heritage was preserved by the municipal authorities, with the help of erudites and school teachers. Yet they, too, did not use the language of community but instead preferred to inscribe local heritage into the universalist national discourse (Chanet 1996). The creation, in 1959, of the ministry of Culture, whose first Minister was André Malraux, strengthened and extended these ties of heritage to universalist Republican values.

In the 1960s and 1970s, an unexpected window of opportunity opened for the concept of community. Indeed, it seemed that the term community might be re-evaluated in a positive manner (Lacroix 2006). This was due in large parts to the protest culture of 1968. 1968ers rejected consumer society and paved the way for environmentalism and ecological thinking that in turn called for a more community-oriented life in the countryside (Artières and Zancarini-Fournel 2008; Pagis 2014; Rouvière 2015). Traditional rural cultures and regional

³ The 1913 law on the protection of Historical Monuments is still considered the basis of heritage policy in France (it lays down in particular the rules concerning the classification and preservation of these monuments).

identities (e.g. in Brittany and Occitania) were now seen no longer solely as the vectors of conservatism but, on the contrary, they were championed as oppositional cultures to a Republican state now denounced as centralised and authoritarian. Such promotion of community was not only linked to the world of rural France, but it also encompassed the working-class world that was already feeling the effects of de-industrialisation. Thus, for example, in the early 1960s the miners of Decazeville, in the South of France, fought against the closure of their pits in the name of the preservation of a professional and local community and proclaimed their desire to "live and work in their home country" (Reid 1985, 227-229, 245-255). Here, the defence of mining heritage was organised alongside the claim to an Occitan identity and framed with the help of the language of community.

This turn to community in the 1960s and 1970s also had an impact in the field of heritage policies. Ethnologists identified a range of popular cultures in local heritage and demanded that these be granted greater consideration and value. The Creusot eco-museum (Debary 2002; de Varine Pierrot Nicolas, Sallavuard Guy and Winkin Yves 2017 : 151-155) was among the most relevant initiatives. It was created in 1972-1973, in the Creusot-Montceau-les-Mines area that bore the imprint of both the mining and the steel industry. Although the mining business was already in decline, the steel industry remained strong at the time. The eco-museum project, carried in particular by Hugues de Varine, explicitly placed the local and professional community of Creusot and its surrounding area at its very centre. Created in the Schneider factory manager's former abode (the Château de la Verrerie), the intention of the project was to base the museum's identity not on a collection, but on its role within an active and existing community, whose members were to fill it with objects, pictures and souvenirs, while in return, the museum symbolised the unity of this community and helped to keep it alive. As declared by Hugues de Varine in 1973: "The entire community forms a living museum whose public

remains constantly within. The museum has no visitors, it has inhabitants" (quoted by Debary 2002, 152). The community was therefore supposed to find itself mirrored in the museum.

This was a highly original undertaking, but it did not last long in its initial format. By 1984, the community project was in deep crisis and, as from this date, the eco-museum adopted a far more classical museography. There were a number of reasons behind this failure. The trouble encountered by the Schneider factories, leading to the liquidation of the Creusot-Loire site in 1984, brought the problems of unemployment and re-industrialisation to the fore. Deindustrialisation divided the community, which in turn made it more difficult for the museum to uphold the idea of a single united community of workers. The Creusot eco-museum was just one example of many that explicitly used the concept of community (Noiriel 1981). They all aimed to bring together social science researchers, heritage workers and trade union activists, in order to promote the memories and popular culture of certain regions or industrial sites, within an approach that was at once cultural and activist. The active promotion of the past was seen as a means to sustain, in the present, the unity and fighting spirit of the group. But these activist dynamics gradually dwindled during the 1980s. In the ministry of culture, Republican values re-asserted the old mistrust in the concept of community (Gasnaut, 2017: 65). When the socialists came to power in 1981, the policies pursued by Jack Lang as Minister of Culture gave greater focus to creating or supporting new urban cultures, while neglecting community-based heritage policies, which he criticized as promoting "archaic" rural or industrial social forms with no hold on the present. According to Lang, they were detrimental to the development of a "modern" cultural policy (Gasnaut 2017, 74).

It was ironic that this re-confirmation of socialist universalist Republicanism took place at a time when deindustrialisation hit France, moving the issue of industrial heritage to the forefront of the debate. From the 1990s onwards, the tangible and intangible heritage of the former industrial regions in the north and east of France have found expression in various

heritage initiatives of local authorities, the development of museums, and the listing and protection of sites (Fontaine 2018). Many of the heritage actors insisted on their desire to involve citizens, their ambition to develop these sites as places dedicated to collective memory, but also as places that should be used for everyday life and to host various new projects related to associational life, culture and tourism (de Varine Pierrot Nicolas, Sallavuard Guy and Winkin Yves 2017). Heritage, thus, was supposed to support the edification of "one's own history" (Bensa and Fabre 1998:23), reinforcing weakened local identities, while boosting sociability and community life. Yet the concept of community was practically never used in all those initiatives. Instead other terms became prominent: habitants (inhabitants), population locale (local population), citoyens (citizens), société civile (civil society), and mobilisation populaire (popular mobilisation). It was a sure sign that the short summer of the concept of community from the 1960s to the 1980s had come to an end. The traditional mistrust in this concept combined with a crisis of French identity, discussed in particular in relation to migration and the meaning of the French revolution as anchor point of that identity. Added to this, the crisis of the left in France and the progressive abandonment of the language of class in the 1980s and 1990s strengthened the traditionalist universalist Republicanism. The scepticism towards 'community' was re-enforced by the negative reception of ideas of communitarianism in France. Communitarianism was largely understood as strengthening particularist identities, in particular of migrants and non-white ethnicities and Muslims. Hence it was denounced as threatening national cohesion and its backbone: Republicanism (Laborde 2008, Chabal 2016).

The concept of community is therefore currently not used to study or develop heritage policies in France, and it is unlikely that this will change in the near future. The negative "emotional halo" that surrounds it is far too strong for that. This may well prevent French scholars from exploring dimensions of heritage that can usefully be understood using an

Anglophone conceptualisation of community discussed below. Instead, French scholarship is in danger of idealising and essentialising French Republicanism. A one-sided adherence to universalist Republicanism ignores the long history of migration that substantially shaped the making of the French working class and its organisations and everyday life at local level. Such ignorance is then also mirrored in industrial heritage initiatives.

The (Largely Left-Wing) Uses of Community in Anglophone Research on Heritage

If the prominent founding fathers of a national discourse on community were, in Germany, Ferdinand Tönnies, and in France Emile Durkheim, then a similar position in the UK is taken by Raymond Williams. When Williams wrote of community as 'the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships' he was thinking of a specifically UK context in which the word has been harnessed to both Left and Right political agendas. He continues: 'what is most important, perhaps, is that unlike all other terms of social organization (state, nation, society, etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term' (Williams 1976: 76). For many commentators, this equation of community with 'human understanding, caring, selflessness, belonging' is a romance (Joseph 2002, vii), and the term has come in for considerable criticism in the UK. Nevertheless, at least until the 1970s, its positive connotations dominated sociological debates concerning modernization and the decline of older, traditional ways of life.

At the same time, community has long been a symbol for social movements, whether secular or religious, aiming to mobilise local collective togetherness and solidarity. Community could serve as antidote to a mixed bag of modern 'ills', including industrialism, statism, technological change, capitalism, individualism, social isolation, the pursuit of private gain, etc., providing enduring currency for many causes. In development policy and rhetoric, for example,

community becomes 'an unalloyed good' that legitimizes government interventions in local areas based on 'community participation' (Anyidoho, 2010: 320). It would be wrong to say there are no negative connotations of community in British usages, as the term can also denote a static, unchanging, insular type of collective association, where individuals feel under pressure to conform to expected norms of behavior (Douglas 2010). However, its positive uses far outweigh the negative ones. In all its uses, community continues to attract scholarly attention, whether through continued efforts to produce typologies (e.g. Brint 2001) or in current third sector, civil society and 'participatory' or 'inclusive' modes of governance or social research (as in 'community engagement', 'community co-production' and 'connected communities'⁴ research). It also retains a marked currency in political and policy discourse as a positive and 'warmly persuasive' term, and as such still attracts study as a socio-cultural phenomenon.

The use of community in heritage is similarly capacious, enabling visitors to interpret it through both nostalgic and progressive frames (Dicks 2001). Most usages of community in British heritage, and cultural discourse in general, have a subjective element, referring to a sense of shared common interests or social ties, rather than just a description of people living together in the same geographical area. There is, in fact, no necessary geographical location in many popular usages of community, and it has been an important term in the rise of identity politics in the UK (as in campaigns and mobilisations of 'the LGBTQ community' or 'BAME communities'). However, heritage often tends to conflate community with place, looking back on neighbourhoods, villages or small towns as containers of special ways of life and

⁴ 'Connected communities' is the name of a national research funding programme by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council that aims to 'mobilise the potential for increasingly inter-connected, culturally diverse, communities to enhance participation, prosperity, sustainability, health and well-being by better connecting research, stakeholders, and communities'. See <https://ahrc.ukri.org/research/fundedthemesandprogrammes/crosscouncilprogrammes/connectedcommunities/visionandoverview/>

accompanying shared values that are now considered lost or threatened. A lively local heritage movement centred on community sprang up in the 1970s and 1980s, boosted by a cluster of economic and political factors. These included pervasive industrial decline, increased tourism, an emphasis on urban branding and 'visitability' to counter economic disadvantage, and a swathe of British government schemes for urban regeneration in the wake of deindustrialisation (Dicks 2004). It resulted in a blossoming of local heritage initiatives in the 1980s-1990s, especially in ex-industrial locales, such as Beamish – 'the Living Museum of the North', the Black Country Museum and the Albert Dock redevelopment in Liverpool. This contrasts with the older official canon of heritage in the UK as consecrated in preserved country homes, rural landed estates and gardens, castles and old historic urban centres. They began receiving some trenchant criticism in the 1980s for their portrayal of elite, nationalistic and conservative historical images and narratives (Wright 1985; Lowenthal 1985; Hewison 1987). The rise of community-focussed heritage dealing with the lives of 'ordinary people' was in some part a response to this.

In the Rhondda Heritage Park in south Wales, for example, we see the Valleys coalfields depicted as home to a vibrant, close-knit people-in-place:

'For over 100 years the two valleys of the Rhondda have been home to a community which owed its existence to coal. Almost every family was directly or indirectly dependent on coal for survival. They have shared times of great joy and sorrow and often suffered poverty which would have crushed lesser communities. Now sadly, the pits of the Rhondda stand idle. Eventually, the scars left by a once great industry will heal, but the story of coal will be etched in the memories of its people forever. [...]

Today, the community, though closely knit, will always extend a warm welcome to visitors, perhaps because their own fathers were the recipients of just such a

welcome when they first arrived with hearts full of optimism, eager to join the vast army toiling underground, in an effort to satisfy the world's insatiable appetite for steam, warmth and fuel'⁵.

This image of a close, yet outward-looking and welcoming community moving together through time is a common trope in industrial and 'ordinary' heritage, pushing aside any negative connotations of closed or static cultures and instead emphasizing community's lively nature, open to outsiders (Dicks 1997). Place-specific connotations aside, this is not very different from the rallying cry of solidarity that the German and French Left traditions embrace.

As we see below, community-as-solidarity is not seen as a contradiction in Anglophone usages and does not preclude a class-based politics, although it was often argued in the 1960s-70s protest movements that it did (e.g. Gitlin 1995, and below; see also Harvey's discussion of community consciousness and organizing, often creating 'parochialist' competition between neighbourhoods, versus class consciousness, expressed through collective organizing across communities and workplaces alike: Harvey, 1976: 292). Notably, the idea of community as place-based collective spirit often finds its way into heritage sites dealing with working-class life. For example, it framed the ways in which interviewees in Smith and Campbell's study (2011) of Castleford in North Yorkshire talked about the past. Visitors to its yearly heritage festival articulated a markedly consistent feeling that it served to rekindle a lost 'sense of community' associated with the mining past. Heritage for them meant working-class people looking out for each other and standing together. I have referred elsewhere to this usage in heritage as the 'good community' discourse, which suggests that 'ordinary', vernacular communities from the past can still teach us lessons today about how to live more in tune with each other

⁵ Text quoted from one of the panels, titled 'A Growing Community', in the old Fan House, Rhondda Heritage Park, south Wales.

in times of adversity, with more collective and mutually-supportive values (Dicks 1999). Hence the Rhondda mining communities are depicted in the Heritage Park as suffering and downtrodden but never defeated, due to their collective strength and solidarity. This reflects a long-established British popular tradition whereby collective struggle and the good of the community is upheld as alternative to the pursuit of private gain.⁶

Communities in the British tradition have always had the potential to acquire more conservative inflections, however. The emphasis on positive shared values has facilitated a paternalistic discourse that shuns notions of solidarity or social change in favour of a more inward-looking cultural continuity expressed in dominant understandings of propriety and adherence to traditional modes of behaviour. It is true that certain individualist strands of conservative thought rule out the language of community altogether by rejecting any notion of specifiable shared human values binding us together (cf. Oakeshott 1991, cited in Freeden 1998, 323). Yet a more collectively-oriented conservative inheritance, traceable from Burke, emphasizes the value of historical tradition, integrative symbols and the virtues of a social order derived from 'natural' sources of authority (Freeden 1998). Communities (whether national, international or smaller-scale) can be enlisted as guardians of this stable moral order that is, or should be, permanent – even as social change whirls around it. This strand of conservatism characterised the Baldwinite tradition of the interwar period in Britain, which invoked community to refer to a classless 'unity of spirit' where tradition and custom prevail yet still move with the times (Williamson 1999). Similar appeals to community in 'One Nation'

⁶ Kamenka (1982: 6) describes the 17th century origins of communitarian thought as '...an important precursor of the communitarian ideals of socialism, elevating the good of the community above private desire, recognising the social nature and function of property, the dignity of labour, the fundamental equality of all human persons, the virtues of austerity, modesty and devotion to the common good, and - above all - the need for a fundamental reorganisation of society by human agencies, by new customs, laws and plans which would bring people up to co-operate instead of competing'.

Conservative Party rhetoric have regularly resurfaced in the intervening decades⁷. In this conservative usage, community becomes a trope that rejects symbols of working-class pride, collective resistance or any deviation from a classless vision of community as inherited tradition and 'organic' values. It is this association with a complacent and regressive sense of community that fuels critics' concerns about its celebration in heritage.

Such a morally-defined discourse of community can be found in visitor responses to heritage sites dealing with working-class industries, where visitors may use the term 'community' in a backward-looking way to depict it as a kind of compensation for past suffering that is 'olde worlde', with no relevance to today (Dicks, 2001). This may in fact compete with more forward-looking and inclusive notions so that the term 'community' can mean different things to different people at the same heritage site. Laurajane Smith's cross-national empirical work in heritage studies confirms this (Smith 2017; Smith 2019). Her visitors to various labour history sites and museums in the US, Australia and the UK all took community as a positive term yet meant quite different things by it, largely based on their pre-existing values and politics. While some identified with a Left-inflected image of 'community spirit' and solidarity, others used community to express and justify social, ethnic and/or moral divisions and hierarchies. This underlines how heritage representations such as 'community' do not have fixed meanings but are actively appropriated in social contexts to express a variety of feelings of belonging and non-belonging. Heritage-makers cannot therefore lock down the meanings visitors will decode (Dicks 2017). Thus, although they may invariably summon community as a positive entity in the British context, the equation of 'ways of life' with 'feelings of belonging' is only a starting point of debate.

⁷ See for example, an echo of Baldwin's 1926 speech 'On England' celebrating 'the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy' in John Major's much-mocked 1993 version referring to 'long shadows on county grounds, warm beer, invincible green suburbs'.

To unpack this further, let's consider how 'community' has been theorized in British scholarship. We can discern two principal approaches. The first defines community as an objectively existing phenomenon, with a distinct set of characteristics (social, cultural, geographical, economic, political) serving as a standard against which various forms of human existence can be measured. The second approaches it as a set of signifiers manifest in practices such as heritage, and treats it primarily as a discursive construct, an idea that we will return to briefly below. The first approach is of more relevance to the argument here, since the idea that a community can be empirically distinguished from a non-community is germane to the heritage distinction between life 'now' and life 'then'. This is a theoretical inheritance shared across continental and British traditions, stemming from some of the founders of sociology in Germany and France (Tönnies, Durkheim), as previously discussed. In the UK, where sociology only became widely established in universities after the Second World War, the changes wrought by rapid (sub)urbanization, technological modernisation and economic diversification were frequently framed temporally as a 'loss of community', similar to the evolutionary replacement of communal *Gemeinschaft* by associational forms of *Gesellschaft* (Bell and Newby 1971).

Nevertheless, such *Gemeinschaft* v *Gesellschaft* binaries do not entirely capture the complexity of political and heritage usages of community in British heritage. In fact, they conceal the ways in which community continues to have currency and relevance in cultural discourse today. In heritage sites such as the Rhondda Heritage Park we see this rhetorical emphasis on how community 'spirit' survives against all odds and is never defeated. This reflects a forward-looking, emancipatory discourse, as already mentioned, rather than a backward-looking gaze. One could argue, of course, that the simple fact of its appearance as heritage consigns this sense of community to the past. Nevertheless, in

the research conducted by the author, it was something that some visitors picked up on, identifying the continuities between communities 'then' and 'now' (Dicks 2015). This has affinities with a more forward-looking, utopian ideal of community that circulates more widely in British contexts, and which is picked up in communitarian discourse (old and new) as well as in a Left-oriented politics of local resistance (e.g. De Fillipis, 2001). It contrasts with a more backward-looking traditional ideal-type, mobilised on both Left and Right, where community is seen either as an obstacle to progress (by modernizers) or romanticized as a lost Eden (by those resisting change). Elements of these two ideal-types frequently slide into each other, so we may find nostalgic myths of harmonious 'close-knit communities' (Guijt and Shah, 1998) sitting alongside more utopian, progressive usages (see Li 1996 for a discussion of these two sides).

Studies emphasizing the emancipatory, forward-looking role of community identity (especially to be found in political sociology and cultural studies) conceptualise community as the breeding-ground for movements of localised collective resistance, typically by the poor, to various forms of entrenched privilege and inequality. First emerging in the utopian and millenarian movements of the seventeenth century, as British New Left historian, E.P. Thompson describes (1980), this forward-looking, communitarian ideal furnished a language of local autonomy that many subsequent radical campaigning movements took up. This communitarian ideal is quite distinct from the negative, and often racist, associations the term has more recently acquired in Francophone cultures, as above. In Thompson's historical account, its appeal to English labour movements stems from a long history of locally-based efforts to organise collective self-provision. These arose in the face of threats to collective autonomy from the industrial discipline of the factory system and the prohibitions against protest

imposed by Methodism.⁸ Community, in this account, comprises 'independent working-class culture and institutions' (Thompson 1980, 460-461). Community, henceforth, was often yoked to a socialist agenda (Kamenka 1982), becoming a natural site for the mobilisation of specifically working-class interests (Bourke 1994).

In this sense, community is a yet-to-be-achieved political goal, something we must look forward to building afresh, rather than trying to reconstruct by yearning for the past. For the Left it has provided a trope whereby abstract forces (such as capitalism, economic restructuring, globalisation) can be concretised by registering and revealing their local impacts to encourage and articulate resistance. Community has in this way proved a powerful image for the labour movement in the British context, often pitting the interests of 'capital' against those of 'community'. In the twentieth century, it was often trades union branches, operating at a local scale, that provided the organizational energy and resources to encourage solidarity and an awareness of community-belonging. For example, the early Welsh coal-mining trade union known as The Fed (1898-1947), operating through local lodges embedded in each area, played a key role in supporting and galvanizing social and cultural collective activities that gave every community an identity of its own (Smith and Francis, 1981). The beneficiaries of lodges' friendly benefits and welfare provision, such as hardship payments, often included ordinary community members, beyond miners and members as such (Thompson, 2012). This provided a model of community organizing that endured into the 1980s, helping to ensure that the south Wales coalfield became the UK's staunchest anti-strike-breaking area during the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) year-long 1984-5 coal dispute, remaining solidly 'out'

⁸ Thompson writes of the ways in which local organising and collective provisioning were key to the building of community spirit in the 'making of the English working-class': "The working-class community of the early nineteenth century was the product, neither of paternalism nor of Methodism, but in a high degree of conscious working class endeavour. In Manchester or Newcastle the traditions of the trade union and the friendly society, with their emphasis upon self-discipline and community purpose, reaches far back into the eighteenth century.[...] But as the Industrial Revolution advanced, it was this code ... which was extended to ever-wider sections of working people. Small tradesmen, artisans, labourers - all sought to insure themselves against sickness, unemployment, or funeral expenses through membership of box clubs or friendly societies.' (Thompson, 1980: 457-458)

until the bitter end. 'Community', in fact, was the political rallying cry adopted by the NUM across the country⁹. 'We've taken a hundred years to build these communities; you can't kill them over night', became a much-repeated refrain (quoted in Rees 1985: 399). The appeal to occupational and community survival as opposed to a wage- or work conditions-focused campaign marked the dispute out from the industrial strikes of the 1970s. Drawing parallels between the 1984-5 strike and the General Strike of 1926, Gilbert (1992: 3) concludes, 'the strike was simultaneously a defence of 'community' and a rediscovery of its possibilities'.

This notion of community as a distinctive ground for collective identity has affinities with a singular tradition of British sociological study of working-class life in the 1950s and 1960s. In the post-war era, British sociology began to document and explore the survival of collective, traditional, disappearing ways of life, which, unlike communitarianism, were ascribed, not chosen. Registering the period's more general concern with 'roots' and vernacular culture, which also gave rise to popular post-war cultural heritage movements such as the folk revival in music and the craft movement, community studies delineated ways of life rooted in shared occupations, traditions, places and kinship. They ranged from Young and Willmott's famous study of Bethnal Green, *Family and Kinship in East London* (1957), to Jackson's *Working Class Community* (1968), which documented a range of 'working class traditions', Henriques and Slaughter's (1969) classic account of a Yorkshire mining village, *Coal is Our Life*, and Tunstall's (1962) study of fishing communities, *The Fishermen*.

Whilst these studies often exposed the status divisions and hierarchies lurking beneath the surface-image of community closeness, they did contribute to an entrenched view of what a community was: that is, working-class, in marginalized manual occupations, downtrodden yet culturally distinctive. The cover picture on Young and Wilmott's 1957 Penguin edition

⁹ This community-focused strategy was followed by the National Union of Mineworkers in the UK both in the 1980s strike and in the 1990s, when pit closures were accelerating. The Union played a locally-based campaigning role throughout this period, which was both necessitated by the spatial unevenness and local specificity of the industry's restructuring, and was also prompted by the diffusion of protest beyond the workplace, in the coalfields and beyond, manifest in the increasingly visible role played by women's, neighbourhood and other protest groups in resisting pit closures in the UK.

contributed unwittingly to a persistent mythology in the post-war years of 'authentic' working-class community life, where women chatted on the street in slippers, suggesting it was merely an extension of the home (Crow and Allan 1994). This was life imagined as 'a place of huge families centred around Mum, of cobbled streets and terraced cottages, open doors, children's street games, open-air markets, and always, and everlastingly, cups of tea and women gossiping together on the doorstep' (Cornwell 1984, 24).

The 'other' of the culturally-rich community life in Bethnall Green were the newly-built, home-based, 'little worlds' of Greenleigh housing estate in Essex. Here, newly relocated East-end families, deprived of the three-generation kinship structure of Bethnall Green, lived a 'privatised' life - one of material gain but supposedly communal loss (Young and Willmott 1957). The British economy was rapidly urbanising with growing consumption, creating what social commentators saw at the time as a 'new' working class with none of the collectivist ways of the 'old' one: suburban, consumerist, individualised, aspirational. Community Studies rather celebrated an 'older' working class which was still distinctive, collective, non-suburban and non-consumerist. It was still to be found, clinging to life in the more marginalised areas of the industrial and agricultural British economy, different not only from the established and prosperous middle class, but also from the rapidly growing ranks of newly 'affluent workers'. The latter were described as a new individualised social grouping emerging from the ashes of the 'old working class', the product of changed work and housing arrangements in a society undergoing 'embourgeoisement' (Lockwood 1966). They were understood as the antithesis of the kind of community that Left politics could mobilise, engendering a growing sense of despair in labour movements of the time.

Nevertheless, 'community' as a rallying cry for the Left has also been attacked for its parochialism and substitution of class-identity with what is claimed to be a place-bound nostalgia. This was particularly vociferous in 1970s Marxist strands of sociology (eg.

Westergaard, 1972; see also Davis and Cousins, 1975). Todd Gitlin attacked American New Leftists for falling into an 'expressive politics', focussed on the display of personal commitment and group-belonging rather than the discipline of organising. American historian Christopher Lasch similarly decried the community-focused, locally-contained politics of the New Left (Lasch 2013). Community was suspected of fostering exclusivity and a 'them v. us' morality, undermining the alternative Left term, 'solidarity'. This is another reason why heritage representations of community have often attracted criticism: heritage centres are usually concerned with the delineation of a place-based way of life in which working-class experiences are contained, rather than with the exploration of class as expression of international solidarities (Dicks 2017).

A further source of controversy regarding community as a political rallying cry came in the 1980s-1990s. In the US, the mutation of communitarianism into its late twentieth century incarnation (via Amitai Etzioni and the US communitarians) mired the term 'community' in debates around individual rights versus responsibilities, suggesting moral choices as its guiding concern and dropping the previous emphasis on working-class solidarity (Morris 1996). Here, community ceases to be invoked as a collective mode of resistance and mutates instead into an appeal for disparate individuals to cohere around mutual moral aspirations. This notion of voluntaristic assent to shared values redefines community as a morally-grounded project and in the UK context was criticised for justifying a move to the Right by the New Labour government of Tony Blair under the banner of 'third-way' politics (1997-2010).

In the academic world, a consensus began to emerge from the early 1960s that the term community, used in any objective way to delineate real communities from non-communities, old communities from new ones, was of limited value. British sociologist Margaret Stacey dismissed the word early on as 'not useful for serious sociological study' (1960, 134). In her view, the term 'social networks' better captured the sociality of local British

life. Bell and Newby's *Community Studies* (1971) contained some trenchant criticisms of the genre, finding it often descriptive, atheoretical and contaminated with the researcher's own value judgements. For urban sociologist Ruth Glass, community studies were 'the poor sociologist's substitute for a novel' (1966, 148). The field had become muddled by attempts to define what a community was. Its use seemed motivated by sentiment and nostalgia rather than empirical evidence. Bourke observes of this period, that 'working class community as it survived in the writings and in the political discourse of working-class commentators was a retrospective construction' (1994, 169).

Much argument centred on whether 'community' referred to a geographical entity that 'contained' forms of social life, or whether forms of social life could be termed 'communities' without sharing a physical space (Wellman and Leighton 1979). This 'question of community' intensified in the wake of economic restructuring and globalisation from the 1970s on. Not only were traditional industrial monopolies and agricultural practices being replaced by more diffuse, mixed forms of work with rapid technologisation and increasing precarity, but the interpenetration of global flows of culture, money, information, politics, and institutions across locations (Hannerz 1992; Appadurai 1996) was undermining any residual notion of socially and occupationally distinctive settlements. Geographers, meanwhile, retained a focus on physical places, but shared sociologists' and anthropologists' scepticism that they might contain 'ways of life' coterminous with them (Agnew 1989).

The study of working-class communities did, however, continue under the banner of 'culturalism' at the influential Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (BCCCS) in the 1970s and 1980s. Viewed through its characteristically class-based, Marxist lens the study of community picked up again on the image of a potential forward-looking cultural 'resistance' forged within subcultural identities that challenged looser sociological ideas of social networks. The BCCCS studies explored how young people in working-class communities were negotiating

the changed conditions of existence inherited from their parents, concluding that collective forms of culture were continually renewing themselves in new contexts of economic appropriation and labour organisation. Working class communities were not a political lost cause, or an 'obstacle to progress', but a useful terrain in which to explore how culture, class and economic change intersected (Williams 1989). Williams' culturalist approach, which he developed in the 1950s-60s, urged study of social life as a 'totality' or as 'the relationship between elements in a whole way of life' (Williams, 2001: 56). The aim was to document the richness and cultural density of working-class life and explore how culture was appropriated and improvised by young people in constant relation to other elements of social change. This mounted a sustained challenge to mainstream 'culture of deprivation' images that prevailed in media and policy talk of 'inner cities' in the 1970s-80s. Cultural studies scholars influenced by Williams (e.g. Willis 1977; Gilroy 1986; McRobbie 1990) documented different 'elements' in a whole way of life not in order to suggest an image of social harmony but to expose the fractures between generations, ethnicities, classes and genders. Community here is not a unity but a means of exploring difference. The term 'subculture' therefore subverted 'community' as a normative ideal, redefining it as a ground of shifting identities and modes of resistance, as well as counteracting a narrow Marxist focus on the pure economics of class.

Community continued to provide a central point of reference in political and popular culture and in wider public discourse into the 1990s and beyond, even as the cultural studies tradition faded and sociology continued to shun its use. British scholars accordingly turned to a second, alternative way of studying community, through examination of the public representations and discourses in which it is frequently invoked. Benedict Anderson (1991) explored how communities need to be collectively 'imagined' through concrete practices of novel-writing, museum-making, media and educational practice, and many writers noted the centrality of practices of representation, symbolism, boundary-drawing and narrative to the

assertion of national and community identity (for example, Hobsbawm 1983; Cohen 1985; Bhabha 1990; Billig 1995).

The tenacity of the community ideal in popular British discourse today indicates that there may be powerful material and economic forces that buttress its survival. For example, it has provided a symbolic antidote to dislocating visions of globalization. Central to the neo-liberalisation processes of the past three decades are profound transformations in temporal and spatial relations, characterized by Marxist geographer, David Harvey (1989) as 'time-space compression'. The speeding up of technological, economic and social innovations, impelled by a late capitalist crisis of accumulation, results in a profound disorientation of sociality in online and offline spaces. Capital becomes ever more mobile, uprooting populations and privatising urban space, bringing experiences of dispossession and non-belonging into everyday life (Harvey 2007). It has been argued by proponents of the 'varieties of capitalism' thesis (Hall 2001) that these experiences have been more powerfully registered in the highly neoliberalised British context than in continental Europe. It is plausible that the embrace of community images and language in many UK heritage spaces in the 1990s and 2000s can be explained at least in part by this intensified feeling of social and economic dislocation.

In the Rhondda case studied by the author, there was a clear local divide between those residents who wanted to forget the past and raze the colliery to the ground, replacing it with a leisure centre to provide something for young people, and those who were glad to see the chimney stack still standing as 'a memorial of the Rhondda people' (Dicks 1996: 57). Strangleman's work exploring how industrial-era images and invocations of community are often described as merely nostalgic, shows how forms of memorialising industrial culture often represent an active and often critical interrogation of historical change on the part of those who have lost not only livelihoods but also cultural and social identities through waves of industrial closure. In this way, the recourse to a vocabulary of 'better days' does not foreclose

on a critical evaluation of the past and its relationship with the present (Strangleman, 1999; 2013). Smith (2018, no page nos) shows how many working-class visitors to American industrial heritage sites used the visit to lament a loss of respect in wider society for workers and for their rights. Heritage allowed them to recover a lost sense of self-esteem and community belonging, remembering how they worked together in a team: 'It's what made us a great nation. I hope someone takes the bull by the horn soon.' Evidently, Smith's visitors saw industrial heritage as a remedy for social injustice, where a national collective forgetting has left them feeling unacknowledged. One can see how their accounts exhibit a mixed sense of private pride and public neglect that could equally be coopted into a populist politics of Left and Right (as the recent US election has readily demonstrated).

It is possible to argue that when working class visitors see their own experiences and identities validated in such ways in public heritage, they are drawing on backward-looking and sanitised tropes of community, lamenting social change in ways readily harnessed by reactionary tendencies. Yet Smith's visitors (Smith 2018) recognised that these narratives furnished forceful messages for the future that said, 'we are still strong'. Smith and Campbell (2017) have argued that 'progressive nostalgia' can powerfully underpin the resilience of vanishing working-class cultures and values that in turn inform contemporary left-wing political projects. Sherry Lee Linkon's analysis of American poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, film and drama similarly comes to the conclusion that representations of deindustrialisation are a powerful resource, capable of strengthening American workers' confidence in facing massive economic restructuring (Linkon 2018). Prosalendis et al (2013) discuss the case of the District Six Museum in Cape Town, which commemorates the inner-city area from where 60,000 poor people were forcibly removed by the apartheid state in the name of 'community development'. This shows how appeals to community can certainly be exclusionary, providing a fig-leaf for cynical interests to justify social and ethnic cleansing. However, Prosalendis' study shows how

the Museum is trying to reach for an alternative, open, democratic and bottom-up evocation of community that would represent a diversity of groups' and individuals' complex experiences, not shying away from the issue of social conflicts and divides. Lucy Taksa, in the context of Australian and US labour history, has also highlighted the diversity and divisions that were present in working-class communities, arguing for the need to re-introduce notions of subjectivity into discussions of class and community, in order to be able to deal with the multiplicity of identities incorporated in a sense of community (Taksa, 2000). Walsh and High have emphasized the importance of space and of networks in understanding the historical significance of community as, first, 'imagined reality', secondly, 'social interaction' and thirdly, a highly fluid and changeable 'process' (Walsh and High 1999). In Samuel's (1994) notion of 'theatres of memory', heritage sites are places where visitors can feel legitimated in expressing and feeling emotion - including anger, loss and a defence of their own sense of self located in larger solidarities and communities. For all its problems and complexities, community remains in British and, as the above example show, maybe even in wider Anglophone countries a powerful symbol and resource that is capable of playing an active role in such a defence.

Conclusion

The above comparison of the use or non-use of the concept of 'community' in heritage-related scholarship has shown three clearly differentiated national contexts. In Britain we find a very prominent use of the concept of community, especially on the political left, where it is associated with a democratising, emancipatory and humanist agenda that can be anti-capitalist and intent on defending working-class values and lifeworlds. Criticisms of the 'objectivist' use of the concept of community that came to the fore from the 1980s onwards shifted the idea of community to a set of representations that were discursive and cultural. In fact, for some time the concept of 'sub-culture' became a rival to that of 'community'. However, the latter was able

to bounce back as it became a powerful symbol of the sense of dislocation produced by a rapidly globalising capitalism.

In Britain, we arguably have a weak statist conception of the nation that partly explains the flowering of notions of sub-state 'communities'. Where we have a strongly statist conception, and it was rarely any stronger than in post-revolutionary France, there notions of 'community' were met with much greater scepticism. It was widely perceived as a threat to the cohesiveness of republican national society, which was universal, modernist and progressivist in orientation and therefore the counter-image to a concept of 'community' understood largely in terms of particularist ethnic or religious identities. Unsurprisingly those who picked up the concept of community tended to be hostile to the republican nation.

Durkheim, who knew Tönnies's ideas about community well, conceptualised community in a very different way to Tönnies – as by-word for anti-modernity and anti-progressivism, in other words as by-word for an anti-republican conceptualisation of the state. No wonder that the left, unlike in Britain, did not pick up the concept and used other concepts instead, such as 'solidarity', 'emancipation' and 'equality'. As the left walked in the footsteps of the revolutionary, republican and statist-universalist paradigm, there was no bridge to the language of community.

The same is true for the emerging heritage discourse in nineteenth century France. Here, the local and the regional had to fit in with the national, leaving no space for community-orientation. Following the 1968 upheaval, there was a window of opportunity to adapt the language of community to the study and representation of rural as well as industrial cultures and regional identities. A prominent example was the eco-museum movement. But ultimately the concepts of modernity and progressivism were too strong and their ongoing association with the universalism of the republican nation prevented the use of the concept of

community, even where there could have been a strong community-focus, such as in the emerging industrial heritage from the 1990s onwards.

In Germany, as in France, the concept of community was never to any significant extent adopted by the political left, although the reasons for this were entirely different. The very conceptualisation of the idea by Tönnies had strong overtones of a traditional organicism that were contrasted to a conceptualisation of an allegedly mechanistic modern 'society'. It was rooted in a critique of modernity that lent itself to more conservative and right-wing discourses, such as the ones prominent in the German bourgeois youth movement of the pre-First World War period. In the interwar period, 'community' was made into a cornerstone of the völkisch discourse of the far right, linking it, as in France, to ideas of ethnicity, but not in describing the unwanted 'other' but in a kind of positive self-description of the German people. In the form of the Volksgemeinschaft it became state ideology under National Socialism.

After 1945, its association with National Socialism irretrievably tarnished it. Even the conservative heritage discourse in 1950s West Germany preferred other concepts such as 'tradition', 'identity' and 'Heimat'. A more critical evaluation of German traditions from the 1960s onwards deepened the scepticism vis-à-vis ideas of 'community' and instead foregrounded concepts such as class and solidarity. However, from the 1980s onwards the concept of Heimat has overtones of community – without using the term and the concept. But the strong spatial regional connotations of Heimat that paper over social divisions, has similar organicist and totalizing implications to the concept of 'community'. Its mainstreaming in recent years therefore must be seen as a worrying trend, as it might well open doors to more traditional uses of community already championed by a populist far right-movement in Germany.

We have highlighted the very different uses and understandings of the concept of community in heritage studies in Britain, France and Germany in order to alert scholars coming from one of those national traditions and vernacular languages to differences in other national traditions and languages. When reading across different national contexts, it is vital for readers to understand the contexts of translated works or works in other languages. Such an understanding across languages and cultures is a key precondition for more transnational and international work in heritage studies.

Where does this review of three very different national conceptualisations of 'community' over time, regardless of manifold transnational receptions and transfers, leave us with regard to the usability of the concept in today's heritage studies? Arguably a greater transnational awareness of those different traditions of conceptualisations would reinforce greater scepticism of the concept of 'community' in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. What would follow here is a greater sense of the pitfalls of the concepts of community, such as its inherent organicism, its tendency to view people and place in homogenizing and totalising ways that do not allow for differentiation, and its preference for collectivising individualities. A more self-aware, self-reflective and critical use of the concept of 'community' would reinforce tendencies in British and American scholarship not to essentialise 'community' and not to provide it with normative content. Instead it would highlight the representational aspects of 'community' and its constructedness. Meta-reflections on 'community' would problematize 'the good community' and instead ask who was constructing a sense of the 'good community' for which purpose and under which conditions? It would highlight the ongoing politics of 'community' instead of taking community for granted and glorifying it.

Such a self-reflective use of community might, on the other hand, be a useful concept for heritage studies in France and Germany. It would allow recognition of the power of representations of social relationships in a particular place and time and provide an analytical

frame for their political rationalities. Communities could be studied as a cultural and discursive practice that sometimes succeeds and sometimes fails and that is always contingent on historical circumstances and never reflects essential characteristics of a people in a given place. In Germany it might help to expose the pitfalls of the concept of Heimat by repoliticising social identities and undermining assumptions about regional identity. In France it might be useful to expose the repressive potential of a universalist state ideology ignoring issues of cultural diversity and migration. By continuing to ignore or vilify such constructions of community, French and German scholars fail to see the importance of representational politics as well as the agency of diverse actors it entails, both in the past and in the present.

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